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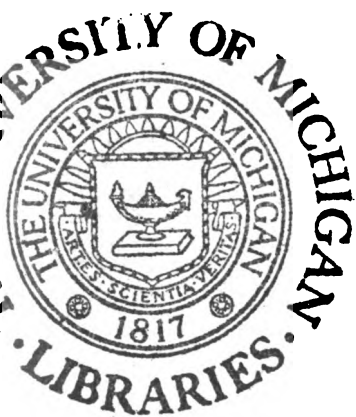


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The
Dudhoria Raj Family
of Azimganj



A MONOGRAPH
ON
THE DUDHORIA RÁJ FAMILY
OF AZIMGANJ

Compiled from Old Family Records and the Chronicles of the
Bháis of Rajputana

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Bhupen Bosh Raichoudhury

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PREFACE.

THIS Monograph on the Dudhoria Ráj Family of Azimganj has been compiled from old family records and musty ancient chronicles in the possession of the Bháts or Hereditary chroniclers of Rajputana, to which the compiler was given access. The chronicles of the Bháts have been verified by reference to contemporaneous history. The account of the Dudhoria Ráj Family as embodied in the following pages may therefore be taken as correct.

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Raja Bejoy Sing Dudhoria of Azimganj.

A MONOGRAPH

ON

THE DUDHORIA RAJ FAMILY OF AZIMGANJ.

THE Dudhorias claim to belong to the ancient Chauhan clan of the Kshatriya caste. The old family records of the Dudhorias, carefully preserved by the Bhats or hereditary chroniclers of the ancient noble families of Rajputana, to which the compiler of this Monograph was accorded an access, disclose the name of Raja Chaban, Ruler of Ajmer, as the first of the princely line from which the Dudhorias trace their direct descent. The next Prince, who succeeded Raja Chaban as the Ruler of Ajmer, was Raja Laosukh. But we find the third descendant Raja Biram Deo established, for reasons unknown, in Garh Chandori as its Ruler. He was succeeded there by Raja Bopalji or Raja Bhupal, and the latter by Raja Birpal. The successor of Birpal was Raja Manik Rao, who had two

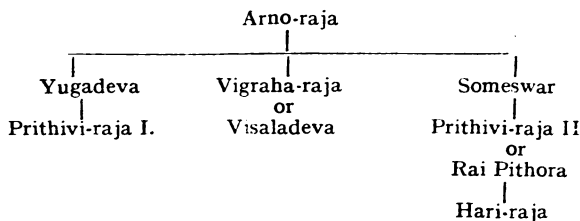
The Dudhorias were originally Chauhan Kshatriyas.

Raja Chaban as Ruler of Ajmer.

Raja Biram Deo as Ruler of Garh Chandori.

We get here the definite date of the conversion of Raja Dudhor Rao to Jainism. In consideration of the great importance of the event, the correctness of the date may be safely assumed, inasmuch as the event and the date would be remembered by the family from generation to generation with some pride and unmistakable precision, and the family chroniclers also would note them down in their records. The date is also identical with the year which saw the conversion of many followers of the orthodox Vedic faith, and particularly of the entire Hindu population of Osia (an old town in

The correctness
of the date.



In the old family records of the Dudhorias, we find the mention of one Raja Prithvi-raja "possessing the physical strength of one hundred elephants", who was also the son of one Raja Somesvar. But this Prithivi-raja and his father Somesvar must have been quite different persons from their descendants of the same names who flourished about eleven hundred years later. Raja Dudhor Rao, the fourth in descent from the early-named Prithivi-raja, embraced Jainism in Sambat 222 or 165 A.D. Prithivi-raja, who was the last great Chauhan king of Ajmer, better known as Rai Prithora, and flourished in the twelfth century, should not therefore be confounded with his earlier namesake. As the scions of old ruling families are generally named after their ancestors, it is just possible that the great Rai Prithora, son of Raja Somesvar of the twelfth century, was named after Raja Prithivi-raja, son of Raja Somesvar of the first century, A. D.

Jodhpur, named Upakesh), headed by its ruler, to the Jain faith. It would be interesting to mention here that the Oswal community of the Jains, to which the Dudhorias belong, originally derived its name from

The origin of the name "Oswal."

this old town of Osia, where this wholesale conversion had taken place. There can be no doubt that about this period, there was a strong reaction against Hinduism, as it then obtained, in favour of Jainism which probably at this time was in the heyday of its existence.

From the date of Raja Dudhor Rao's conversion, it is easy to work up the approximate date of the rule in Ajmer of Raja Chaban, who was the first prince of the line. Raja Dudhor Rao was the thirteenth prince in descent from Raja Chaban, and allotting an average of 25 years' rule to each of the twelve princes that had preceded him, we may safely fix Raja Chaban's rule in Ajmer between 135 B.C. and 110 B.C. The history of the Dudhoria family therefore goes back to very ancient time.

If the above surmise be correct, it would be interesting to take a brief survey of the state of Northern India during Raja Chaban's rule in Ajmer, and obtain a glimpse of the social, religious and political conditions of the country. Magadha was at this time the most flourishing kingdom in Northern

Social, religious and political conditions of Northern India in Raja Chaban's time.

India, and the Sunga Dynasty, of which the great Pushyamitra was the founder, was then holding its sway over a vast territory extending from Bengal in the East to the Punjab in the West, and as far South as the Narmada River. Pushyamitra reigned from 185 B.C. to 149 B.C., and was succeeded by his son the Crown Prince, Agni-mitra, "who had governed the Southern Provinces during his father's lifetime."* As the Sunga Dynasty ruled in Magadha down to 73 B.C., it is evident that the province of Ajmer formed a part of the kingdom of Magadha, and Raja Chaban was merely a vassal ruler owning allegiance to the Sungas. He was probably a contemporary of Agni-mitra or his brother Sujyestha. The Sungas were Brahmins by caste, and were the followers of the orthodox Vedic faith. Pushyamitra had revived and celebrated "with appropriate magnificence the antique rite of the horse-sacrifice (*asvamedha*), which, according to immemorial tradition, could only be performed by a paramount sovereign. This memorable horse-sacrifice of Pushyamitra marked an early stage in the Brahminical reaction (against Buddhism and Jainism which prohibited bloody sacrifices), which was fully developed five centuries later in the time of Samudra-gupta and his successors."†

* *Vide* Vincent Smith's "Early History of India," 3rd Edition (1914), page 203.

† *Vide* pages 200 and 202.

According to Buddhist writers, "Pushyamiitra was not content with the peaceful revival of Hindu rites, but indulged in a savage persecution of Buddhism, burning monasteries and slaying monks from Magadha to Jalandhar in the Punjab. Many monks who escaped his sword are said to have fled into the territories of other rulers."*

If the records of the Jain writers were available, they would also undoubtedly reveal a similar ghastly tale with regard to their own monasteries and monks.

It would not be out of place here to obtain a glimpse of the social, religious and political conditions of the country when Raja Dudhor Rao of Vitali became a Jain convert. The interval between the time of Raja Chaban and Raja Dudhor Rao is nearly 300 years. During this period great changes were wrought in the Government of the country. The Sunga Dynasty was overthrown by the Kanvas, and the latter again by the Andhras about 27 B.C. The Andhras, during the reigns of Kings Satakarni and Pulumayi I, engaged in conflicts with foreign tribes (mostly Sakas) "which had formed settlements and carved out kingdoms in Western India, subordinate apparently at first to the Indo-Parthian and subsequently to the Kushan Sovereigns."† Raja Satakarni who ascended the throne about 109 A.D.,

Social, religious and political conditions of India, when Raja Dudhor Rao became a Jain convert in 165 A.D.

* *Vide* page 202.

† *Ibid*, page 209.

succeeded about 124 A.D. in extirpating the Kshaharata Dynasty and annexing their dominions which extended from Southern Rajputana to the Nasik and Poona Districts and included the Peninsula of Kathiawar. "Satakarni posed as the champion of the Hindu religions, including both Brahmanical Hinduism and Buddhism, as against the creed of casteless foreigners Sakas, Pahlavas and others, and prided himself on having re-established the practice of caste-rules."* He was succeeded in 135 A.D. by Pulumayi II who was married to a daughter of Rudradaman I, the Great Saka Satrap of Ujjain; but the matrimonial connexion did not prevent the Great Satrap from twice defeating his son-in-law and wresting from him most of the territories which Satakarni had won from the Kshaharatas. Pulumayi the Second died about 163 A.D. and was succeeded by Yajna Sri in 173 A.D.

When Raja Dudhor Rao embraced Jainism in 165 A.D., the influence of the Andhras, who were champions of Hinduism, had been on the decline, and a reaction in favour of Buddhism and Jainism had set in, in the same proportion as the Andhras lost their hold upon the distant Satrapies and the Saka Satraps became more and more powerful. The interval between the death of Pulumayi II in 163 A.D. and of Yajna Sri's succession to the throne in 173 A.D., must have been a

* *Ibid*, page 210.

period of great unrest, chaos and disorder, and the Saka Satraps certainly used it to their own advantage. The Sakas were treated as foreigners and held in contempt by the Hindus for their outlandish ways and for ignoring the caste-rules and disregarding the precepts of the Hindu Scriptures. It was therefore quite natural for them to side and sympathise with the persecuted Jains and Buddhists who also, like them, were not the votaries of the caste-system and were more liberal than the Hindus in admitting converts into their folds. We may, therefore, safely surmise that some of the great Saka Satraps encouraged the Jain and the Buddhist propagandas by themselves becoming converts to these creeds, during the decline of the Andhra power, and there was an unwonted activity at this time on the part of the Jain and the Buddhist monks to preach the doctrines of their religions, and make a large number of converts among the Hindus to their faith. The wholesale conversion to Jainism of the inhabitants of Osia along with their ruler, and of Raja Dudhor Rao of Vitali, and probably of many other Hindu Chiefs, at this time, may thus be accounted for.

With the conversion of Raja Dudhor Rao to the Jain faith, the family appears to have passed into comparative obscurity. The third son of Raja Dudhor was Mohan Pal whom we find settled in Garh

After Raja Dudhor Rao, the family passes into comparative obscurity.

Chandori. Either the family, on account of its conversion, became unpopular among the Hindus, or the tenets of the Jain faith becoming incompatible with the performance of the duties of a ruler who had to engage in occasional *bloody* conflicts with neighbouring chiefs, it was unable to retain its power any longer. Whatever might be the reason, it is curious that we do not find the mention of any Raja in the long list of names of the descendants of Raja Dudhor Rao during more than seventeen hundred years, until we come to Bijoy Sing Dudhoria of Azimganj, who was made a Raja by the British Government in the year of grace 1908.*

Raja Dudhor Rao's son, Mohan Pal, removed to Garh Chandori, probably because the elder branch of the family was still ruling there. But the Dudhorias did not very likely find much sympathy among their kinsmen on account of their new conversion to the Jain faith, and Mohan Pal's son removed to Vanicote. We find the family afterwards settled in Garh Rutlum whence it migrated, after a few generations, to Merhta. The next migration was to Rajaldesar in

The family returns to Garh Chandori, thence goes to Vanicote, thence to Garh Rutlum, thence to Merhta, and thence to Rajaldesar.

* From the fourth century A.D. Buddhism and Jainism were on the decline, and there was a revival of Hinduism which continued its prosperity with occasional set-backs till the time of the Mahommedan invasion of India. The Jains and Buddhists were naturally therefore in the background during this and the subsequent period.

Bikanir, where the family lived for several generations in peace and affluence, engaged in the peaceful occupation of trade. We find mention made of several affluent merchants of this family, who made rich gifts to temples and other religious institutions.

From Rajaldesar, the family made its last migration to Azimganj, in the district of Murshidabad, in Bengal, in 1774, under the leadership of Harjimal Dudhoria, and his two sons, Sabai Sing and Maujiram, who started life in Azimganj as merchants.

They were so industrious and honest in their dealings that they prospered in a short time. The real prosperity of the family, however, began with Harekchand Dudhoria who became not only a big merchant, but also opened money-lending business in Calcutta, Seraiganj, Azimganj, Jangipur, and Mymensingh. He died in 1862, a comparatively rich man, leaving behind a good name and two sons, Budh Sing and Bissen Chand.

“The sons,” writes a contributor to Major J. H. Tull-Walsh’s *History of Murshidabad District* (p. 246)* “who were quite young at the time, succeeded to their father’s wealth and flourishing business ;

* A History of Murshidabad District, compiled and edited by Major J. H. Tull-Walsh, I.M.S., F.L.S. (1902).

and as they grew up, joined their combined talent and energy to make a further move towards prosperity. Budh Sing was patient, amiable and industrious, while Bissen Chand, who displayed wonderful business capacities from his boyhood, was distinguished by a versatile intellect, keen penetration, firm grasp of details, and quick decision. The two brothers lived harmoniously and were not long in making their mark in the world. They extended their money-lending business to several districts and opened banks at Calcutta, Serajganj, Mymensingh, Jangipur, and Azimganj. People had unbounded faith and confidence in the honest dealings of the bankers, in consequence of which they ran a very successful business. Gradually, they began to invest money in landed property, and ultimately became big zemindars, owning lands in the districts of Murshidabad, Mymensingh, Birbhum, Nadia, Faridpur, Purnea, Dinajpur, and Rajshaye. The brothers were bent not merely upon amassing wealth, but upon making a proper use of it as well. They helped the poor members of their community, fed thousands of the needy and hungry in times of famine by opening *annachattras* (poor-houses), clothed the poor, contributed to charitable and other funds, constructed, or caused the ladies of their family to construct, *dharmasalas* and temples in several parts of India, for the use of their co-religionists, and did sundry other works of public good, too numerous to mention here.

Their good name and fame spread far and wide, so that when Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, visited Jangipur (the scene of his early labours in another capacity), he was pleased to honour the brothers by paying them a visit. The Bengal Government was so pleased with their liberality and public services that it conferred on both of them on January 2nd, 1888, the title of *Rai Bahadur* as a personal distinction. They were also appointed Honorary Magistrates of the Lalbagh Bench in Murshidabad, which they adorned for several years."

The banking and money-lending business having attained vast proportions, the brothers had separated in 1877; and from that time carried on business

Rai Budh Sing
Bahadur's son,
Indra Chand visited
Europe in 1889.

under separate names. In 1889, Indra Chand Dudhoria, the eldest son of Rai Budh Sing Bahadur by his first wife, who had received English education under Messrs. C. J. Owens and J. R. D. Fox, was led by youthful curiosity and the attractions of the Paris Exhibition, to make a journey to Europe and visited England. He undertook this journey to Europe without the consent or knowledge of his father and uncle, and thereby brought on himself and his relations a social persecution which culminated in the institution of the celebrated Jain Defamation case in the High Court of Judicature in Calcutta, in which almost all the best and ablest counsels were engaged on both sides. The Jains, like

the Hindus, are an orthodox community, and not only discountenance sea voyages, but also excommunicate those who undertake it. Indra Chand's journey to Europe created an

The social controversy that raged round the visit.

unprecedented *furore* in the community, which resulted in splitting it up into two

powerful factions and creating much bad blood between them. Ultimately, however, a sort of compromise was arrived at, which poured oil over the troubled waters, and set at rest, for the time being, the heated controversy that had raged round the question of Indra Chand's re-admission into the community. Indra Chand died leaving two minor sons, Jagat Sing and Ranajit Sing, of whom the former died three years later. Indra Chand had married a daughter of Rai Setab Chand Nahar Bahadur of Azimganj, and separated from his father in food and estate soon after his return from Europe.

Rai Budh Sing Bahadur had two other sons by his second wife, *viz.*,

Ajit Sing and Kumar Sing.

Ajit Sing and Kumar Sing. But both of them died in

October 1910, after a short illness, the one following the other within 24 hours. This mournful and tragic event was a terrible shock to their father in his old age, their mother having already predeceased them.

Ajit Sing has left two minor sons by his wife, a daughter of Babu Narpat Sing, Zemindar of Harwat, who also had died before her husband. These two minor

grandsons, Naba Kumar Sing and Jai Kumar Sing, are now the only heirs of Rai Budh Sing Bahadur. Kumar Sing was married to a daughter of Babu Dalchand Singhee of Azimganj, but he has left no issue.

Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur had, by his first wife, 18 children of whom only two survived, viz., Bijoy Sing, and a daughter named Lachmi Kumari. As the children died in their very infancy, Rai Bissen Chand was advised to perform a *Putresthi* ceremony for the birth of a long-lived son and heir. The ceremony was conducted and performed by Pandit Madhusudan Bhattacharyya, a Bengali Brahmin, who was a descendant of the celebrated saintly Thakur of Mehar, and was himself a man of high spiritual power and attainments. Within a year of the performance of this ceremony, Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur was blessed with a son in December 1879, and the Pandit named the new-born babe, Bijoy Sing, and predicted his long life and prosperity. Lachmi Kumari was Bijoy Sing's younger sister and was married, in 1895, to Maharaj Bahadur Sing, the only son of the late Rai Dhanpat Sing Bahadur of Baluchar by his second wife. She died in 1904, leaving one son named Taj Bahadur, and three daughters.

Bijoy Sing's mother having died in 1892, his father took another wife in August, 1893. Bijoy Sing was barely 14 years old, when

Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur's death in March, 1894.

he was married, in February 1894, to the youngest daughter of Rai Dhanpat Sing Bahadur of Baluchar by his second wife. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp and splendour, and a very large sum of money was expended over it by the fond and doting father. Unfortunately, the latter did not long survive this happy event. In March, 1894, he went on a pilgrimage to Samet Sekharji, as the Pareshnath Hill, situated in the Hazaribagh district, is generally called by the Jains. On his return home, he fell ill and, after a brief spell of illness, passed away, leaving young Bijoy Sing and a girl-widow to mourn his loss.

Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur's untimely death at a comparatively early age proved a very great shock to the elder surviving brother, Rai Budh Sing Bahadur. Though the brothers had long ago separated in business, and partly also in landed estate, they were deeply attached to each other, and were guided by each other's advice and counsel. Rai Budh Sing Bahadur felt the loss very keenly, and having been appointed guardian of Bijoy Sing,

Rai Budh Sing Bahadur. Though the brothers had long ago separated in business, and partly also in landed estate, they were deeply attached to each other, and were guided by each other's advice and counsel. Rai Budh Sing Bahadur felt the loss very keenly, and having been appointed guardian of his minor nephew's person and property, took his vast estate and business directly into his own management. The question of Bijoy Sing's education was settled in consultation with Mr. J. Kennedy,

Bijoy Sing's education. the Collector, and Mr. F. B. Taylor, the District Judge of Murshidabad, and it was decided to give the

minor a sound practical home education under a competent tutor. Babu Abinas Chandra Das, M.A., B.L., of Bankura, who is described in the *History of Murshidabad* as "a distinguished scholar" and well-known Bengali author, was appointed tutor, and Bijoy Sing made considerable intellectual progress under him. In December, 1900,

Bijoy Sing became major in 1900 and took the management of his estates into his own hands.

the minor attained his majority, and assumed direct control of his estate and banking business. He was assisted in the management of his zemindary properties by his former tutor, Babu Abinas Chandra Das, who was now appointed the manager of his estate, and in the management of his banking business by the late Babu Kirit Chand Sethia, Dewan, who was in charge of the Sudder firm at Azimganj, Babu Sumer Chand Sethia who was in charge of the Mymensingh firm, Babu Manik Chand Lukor who was in charge of the Calcutta firm, and the late Babu Rohini Kumar Nath who was in charge of the Jangipur firm. Soon after the attainment of his majority, he purchased the Goamulty Indigo Concern a valuable property from Mrs. Atkinson, and thereby considerably augmented the income of his property.

In December, 1904, the All-India Jain Conference met at Baroda, of which Rai Budh Sing. Dudhoria Bahadur was elected President, and his nephew,

The All-India Jain Conference of Baroda held in 1904.

Bijoy Sing, Vice-President. Referring to this matter, the *People* of Calcutta wrote as follows, in its issue of December 27 :—

“ It may not be known to most of our readers that at the recent Jain Conference held at Baroda, two very distinguished members of the Jain community in Bengal took prominent parts in its deliberations. Rai Budh Sing Dudhoria Bahadur and his worthy nephew Srijut Bijoy Sing Dudhoria, the rich bankers and zemindars of Azimganj in the district of Murshidabad, were respectively elected President and Vice-President of the Conference. It was thus not only these two gentlemen, but Bengal also were honoured by the Jains of India. Rai Budh Sing Bahadur is a typical Jain gentleman, and Srijut Bijoy Sing is an ideal young zemindar, rich not only in wealth, but also in the superb qualities of the head and heart. We are really glad to find that both of them occupy so high places in the estimation of their brethren.”

Bijoy Sing's education having been liberal, he naturally felt inclined to take part in public affairs, and was nominated a Commissioner of the Azimganj Municipality by Government

Bijoy Sing appointed a Municipal Commissioner by Government in 1903.

in 1903. He diligently applied himself to the study of Municipal administration, and when the general election took place in 1906, he posed as a candidate for the Chairmanship of the Municipality, to which he was elected,

after a keen contest with Rai Manilal Nahar Bahadur, who had been elected Chairman of the Azimganj Municipality in 1906. For a young man of seven-and-twenty to be

placed at the head of the Municipal administration of two important towns, such as Azimganj and Baluchar, bespoke the confidence of the rate-payers and of their elected representatives in his ability and desire to promote public good. Subsequent events have proved that their confidence was not misplaced, for the authorities and the high Government Officials have been thoroughly satisfied with his administration and have placed on record their high appreciation of his excellent administrative powers. On

Bijoy Sing appointed Honorary Magistrate of the Lalbagh Independent Bench in 1907.

January 5, 1907, he was appointed an Honorary Magistrate of the Independent Bench of Lalbagh, sitting singly, in which capacity also he satisfactorily discharged his duties and was very soon invested with second class power. The same year, he was appointed a member of the General Committee of Lady Minto's Fête in aid of the Nursing Association, in the success of which he took a very keen interest and prominent part.

On June 26, 1908, on the occasion of the Birthday Celebration of His late Imperial Majesty, King-Emperor Edward VII, the title of "Raja" conferred upon Bijoy Sing, in recognition of his public services on 26th June, 1908. The title of "Raja" conferred upon Bijoy Sing, in recognition of his public services on 26th June, 1908. title of "Raja" was conferred

on Bijoy Sing by Lord Minto, the then Vice-roy and Governor-General of India, in recognition of his public services and public spirit, the good tradition of his family, his liberality, and high character and rank. He is the only Raja among the Oswals of the Jain community in Bengal, and as such, holds a unique position among his co-religionists.

The Sanad and Khillut of Raja were formally delivered to him at a public Durbar held at Belvedere in Calcutta on the 14th November, 1908, by the Hon'ble Sir Andrew Fraser, K.C.S.I., the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In delivering them to the Raja, Sir Andrew Fraser addressed him as follows :—
 “Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria, I congratulate you very heartily on the high honour which has been bestowed upon you. You have started life under very favourable circumstances. You have inherited high position and good traditions. Your father has done distinguished public services, and we believe that you are following in his steps. You have been very liberal in encouraging works of beneficence, and I trust that you will be long spared to help forward good work in this Province.”

The bestowal of the title of “ Raja ” on Bijoy Sing was naturally a matter of great jubilation among his fellow-citizens, Hindu, Jain and Mahommedan, and congratulatory addresses were presented to

Public jubilation and presentation of congratulatory addresses to the Raja

him at a thoroughly representative public meeting, held on 29th September, 1908, at Jiaganj, and presided over by Babu Nikhil Nath Roy, Sub-Divisional Officer of Lalbagh. The public address which was presented to him in a beautiful silver casket ran as follows :—

“ To Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria,
Zemindar and Chairman of the
Azimganj Municipality.

“ Sir,—We, the Hindu, Jain, and Mahomedan residents of Baluchar and Azimganj, beg leave to approach you with this our humble address of congratulation on your happy elevation to the rank of Raja. This honourable distinction, conferred on you by Government in recognition of your merits, is a matter of great gratification to us, who realise the appropriateness of the selection, and appreciate the perfect worthiness of the recipient of the honour.

“ Endowed with the sterling qualities of head and heart that promise still higher and more exalted distinctions for you, you have already afforded us bright glimpses of a noble career, of unfailing devotion to the public good, which entitle you to our sincere esteem and affection.

“ Your efficient administration of the affairs of the Municipality has fully established your claim to the confidence of the public, and eminently fitted you to be a leader of our civic functionaries.

“We gladly embrace this occasion to give expression to our grateful appreciation of your generosity in coming forward with the offer of a princely donation for the construction of a suitable building for the local Edward Coronation Institution. This, we are persuaded to believe, is but the earnest of other favours to follow.

“In conclusion, we hope and trust that you will not rest contented with the laurels you have already won, but rise higher and higher in rank and glory, and ever continue in the path of a noble and virtuous career and public usefulness.

“Wishing you health and happiness and a long life of public utility,

We beg to subscribe ourselves,

Sir,

Your admiring and grateful fellow-citizens.”

The following was the full text of the

The Raja's reply to the congratulatory addresses. Raja's reply as published in the *Bengalee* in its issue of October 1, 1908 :—

“Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for the address that you have just presented to me, expressing your felicitation on the honour that Government has been pleased to bestow on me. I need hardly say that I have been deeply touched by your kind words ; but I venture to think that it is your natural goodness that has prompted you to say so many kind things about my humble self. Allow

me, therefore, to take your words to indicate only a sincere and pious desire on your part that I should cultivate all the virtues you credit me with. Gentlemen, it would be the proudest day in my life, if I could live up to the high ideal of true manhood you have held up before me.

“ You have referred, in very kindly terms, to my administration of the affairs of this Municipality. The success of my administration, if it is such, is due not only to my individual exertions, but also to the hearty help and co-operation which I have received from my esteemed colleague, the Vice-Chairman, and most of my esteemed brother-Commissioners, and last, though not least, to the sympathetic help and guidance of the high Government Officials who control our Municipal administration. Though I am well aware of my own imperfections and know that there still remains much to be done, yet I can say, without hesitation, that I have always tried my best to act according to the light that is within me, and to ensure public health and happiness, by improving local sanitation as much as our limited funds would allow. Gentlemen, we all value and appreciate the boon of local self-government, conferred upon us by our benign Government. Let us all heartily co-operate to make the administration of our local affairs highly successful.

“ Gentlemen, you have also referred in your address to my humble donation for con-

structing a suitable building for the local Coronation Institution. A school for the higher education of our youths had long been a desideratum of the locality ; but it spoke volumes of your own patriotism and spirit of self-help when you united your individual efforts to start the school. I am glad to note that the school has been making steady progress since its establishment. It having been represented to me some time ago by some of the leading gentlemen of the locality that the institution was badly in need of a suitable building of its own which would cost about Rs. 7,000, I could not naturally refuse their request to construct the building myself. Though the original estimates have now nearly doubled and probably may become even larger, if we are to comply with the new University regulations, I do not grudge in the least to bear the entire cost, considering the object for which the money is to be spent. I hope, gentlemen, that you will never allow your lively interest in, and your ardent enthusiasm for, the school to flag on any account. As a further proof of the interest I take in your school, I have much pleasure in announcing to you to-day that, as long as the school will continue to exist, I will pay every year a monthly scholarship of Rs. 5 to the best deserving student who passes the Matriculation Examination from this school, and prosecutes his higher studies elsewhere. This scholarship shall be tenable by each such student for two

academic years. I intend to associate this scholarship with the pious and revered memory of my late father, Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur, and it will take effect from the next year. Gentlemen, I shall be always willing to listen to any reasonable representation on your part for anything that tends to promote public good and welfare, and to render you assistance to the best of my ability.

“Allow me to thank you again for the kind address that you have been pleased to present to me. I need not repeat that I have been deeply touched by your hearty goodwill and cordial wishes for me. Let us hope that we shall always be able to act in friendly harmony and concert for consummating the greatest good of the greatest number.

“I now turn to the address which you, the officers of the Azimganj Municipality, have been good enough to present to me. I admit that it is perfectly natural for you to feel pride in the elevation of your chief to higher rank and honour, especially when that elevation comes to him by virtue and in consequence of the office he holds and in recognition of the success of the administration of local affairs, for which he and his colleagues, the Vice-Chairman and the Commissioners, are mainly responsible, and to which you all are well conscious of having contributed in no small measure. Gentlemen, I make no secret of the fact that but for willing, honest, conscientious and hard-working

subordinates, no administrator, however capable, can successfully carry on the work entrusted to him, and it is a pleasure to me to publicly bear testimony to your honest and patient industry, and the readiness and promptitude with which you all have executed our orders and performed your work. I hope that you will always continue to discharge your respective duties faithfully and consciously, and help your superiors in making the administration of our local affairs a thorough success. As I have already said, there is still much in all of us to be desired, and much more to be done. We should not, therefore, rest on our laurels, but we should apply ourselves more and more energetically to the performance of our duties. I sincerely thank you, gentlemen, for your address and for your reference to my humble self and your appreciation of my humble public services."

At the general election of the Municipal Commissioners, held in January 1909, Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria was re-elected Chairman of the Azimganj Municipality for the second time in 1909.

On the 18th August of the same year, the Hon'ble Sir Edward Norman Baker, K.C.S.I., the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, honoured the Raja by a personal visit to him at his palatial residence at

The Lieutenant-Governor paid the Raja a visit at Azimganj and opened the school building at Jiaganj on August 18th, 1909.

Azimganj, which has a very beautiful situation on the right bank of the Bhagirathi. The same day, Sir Edward Baker opened the fine school-building at Jiaganj.

The following is a detailed report of the opening ceremony of the school-building, as published by the *Bengalee*, in its issue of August 20th, 1909:—

A detailed report of the opening ceremony of the school performed by the Lieutenant - G o v - ernor.

“ At 10 A.M., the school-building for the Jiaganj Edward Coronation, which the Raja had constructed at a cost of about Rs. 20,000, was opened by His Honour. Babu Abinas Chandra Das, M.A., B.L., Manager of the Azimganj Raj Estate, received His Honour at the landing. His Honour drove in the Raja's splendid motor to the school premises, followed by the Raj sowars, and His Honour's party in carriages. The school premises were most tastefully and beautifully decorated, and the gate at the entrance was greatly admired. The *élite* of Azimganj, Baluchar, Murshidabad, Cossimbazar, and Berhampur were present, among whom were also many European ladies and gentlemen. The Raj sepoys presented arms, and the band played welcome to His Honour. On His Honour taking his seat in a silver and gold chair, a welcoming song in Bengali was sung. Next Babu Nikhil Nath Roy, S.D.O., Lalbagh, and ex-officio President of the School Committee, read a short history of the institution which was started in 1902. The

institution having been in need of a suitable school-building according to the new University Regulations, Raja Bijoy Sing was approached by the local public to construct it. The original estimate was Rs. 6,000, but it gradually rose to Rs. 12,000, and ultimately to about Rs. 20,000. The Raja, with his usual generosity, readily came forward with his donation, and a suitable site having been selected, the foundation-stone of the building was laid by Mr. A. G. Hallifax, Collector of Murshidabad, on 6th May, 1909. The Raja, with his usual energy and expedition when he once takes up a work, pushed it on and completed everything in the course of a month-and-a-half, which was record work in the construction of a large masonry building. The history of the institution having been read, Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhuria requested His Honour to declare the building open in the following words:—

“Your Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The Report that has just been read by the ex-officio President of the Managing Committee of the School, gives a short history of the institution and of the school-building that I will presently have the pleasure of requesting your Honour to kindly declare open. A good school is, in my humble opinion, none the less useful in the economy of society than any other institution of public utility, inasmuch as it gives a healthy tone, training, and discipline to the mind, curing its disorders, and helps to make noble, useful,

and loyal citizens of young men, keeping them straight on the path of duty and righteousness. It was mainly with this object in view that I cheerfully came forward with my humble donation to construct this sacred Temple of Learning, which will now furnish the school with a suitable habitation, and will, I hope, help to ensure its stability. I shall indeed consider myself amply rewarded, when this school will be the happy nursery of noble minds and noble souls, and will, year after year, turn out young men who will not only be the pride of their homes and the ornaments of their society, but also the useful and loyal citizens of this great Empire, presided over by our august Sovereign, whose noble and honoured name the institution is proud to bear. With these few words, I beg most respectfully to request your Honour to declare this humble school-building open.'

"His Honour said that he felt very great pleasure in performing the opening ceremony of the school-building. Only two hours ago, he had performed another interesting ceremony on the other side of the river in connexion with the hospital building, constructed by Babu D. S. Nowlakha. It bespoke the generosity of his friend, Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria, to provide the Jiaganj school with a suitable building according to the new regulations of the University, which were rather strict and presented some difficulty to many a school with moderate funds. The generosity of the Raja and his munificent

donation towards an object like this were, therefore, to be greatly appreciated. This was certainly not the first instance of the Raja's generosity and public spirit, and he hoped that it would not be the last. His Honour was pleased to learn from the report, read by the S. D. O., that the results of the school at the University Examination had been satisfactory, and hoped that the school would continue to prosper. The generous donor's noble deed would undoubtedly be greatly appreciated by the local public, and His Honour thanked him for it on behalf of the Government. The building was then formally declared open by His Honour.

“ Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria then rose to propose a vote of thanks to His Honour. He said:—‘Your Honour, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—It is now my most pleasant duty to respectfully propose a vote of thanks to your Honour for kindly condescending to perform this very interesting ceremony this morning, and honouring our humble locality with your Honour's august presence. Your Honour's kind visit to this place for the performance of a ceremony like this has created a very happy impression in the minds of the local public, which is sure to last long, and will form a brilliant record in the history of this locality. Personally, I am deeply grateful to your Honour for your kindly complying with the humble request that I made on behalf of myself and the local public, to declare the school-building open, and I hope my senti-

ments will find a ready and spontaneous response in the hearts of all present in this hall.'

"Babu (now Rai Bahadur) Baikuntha Nath Sen of Berhampur then seconded the Raja's proposal in an appropriate speech, which was greatly appreciated by the audience and His Honour who in return made a very graceful reply.

"The ceremony over, His Honour and party were photographed, standing on the steps of the school verandah. The Raja then showed His Honour and party round the school. His Honour and party having been garlanded by the Raja, they left the school premises at 11 A.M."

The Raja visited his Mymensingh firm in the winter of 1909. A flourishing money-lending business is being carried on here for the last three generations, and the Raja has also got valuable zemindari properties in the district. The arrival of the Raja was greeted with joy by his large *clientele*, consisting of business men and zemindars. The townsmen also accorded him a hearty reception. There were exchanges of visits between him and the renowned zemindars of the district. Altogether, his trip to Mymensingh was very pleasant and successful.

The firm at Jangipur was the next to be visited by the Raja on September 29th, 1910. The people of Jangipur and Raghunathganj mustered strong to accord the Raja a

The Raja's visit to Mymensingh in the winter of 1909.

His visit to Jangipur on 29th September, 1910.

hearty reception. Babu Kali Charan Sinha, the President of the Reception Committee, read an address of welcome on behalf of the public, which was presented to the Raja in a beautiful silver casket. On October 1st, he presided at the distribution of prizes to the students of the Jangipur H. E. School, and in the course of his speech, announced the donation of Rs. 500 towards the construction of a hostel for the boys. The Raja visited the Jangipur Hospital, which was accommodated in a nice building, constructed by his father and uncle in 1878, and made a present of 25 blankets for the use of the patients. On October 3rd, he distributed prizes to the girls of the Victoria Girls' School of Jangipur, and contributed Rs. 100 towards the construction of a house for the school. He entertained the leading gentlemen at an evening party at his *kothi*, and distributed alms and coins among the poor to signalize his visit. He was pleased with the performance of the Raghunathganj Amateur Dramatic Club, and made handsome contributions to its fund.

On 6th February, 1911, Raja Bijoy Sing was asked to preside at the sitting of the All-India Jain Conference, held in Bombay at the end of March of that year, but he could not accept the invitation on account of the serious illness of his wife. In March, 1912, he was unanimously re-elected Chairman

The Raja offered the Presidentship of the All-India Jain Conference of Bombay in 1911, and re-elected Municipal Chairman for the third time in 1912.

of the Azimganj Municipality for the third time in succession. Besides His many-sided activities. serving as Municipal Chairman, and Honorary Magistrate, he also sat as a member of the District Board of Murshidabad, was a member of the Executive Committee of the Imperial League, of the Executive Committee in connexion with King Edward Memorial Fund, of the Executive Committees in connexion with the Lord Minto Memorial Fund and of the Royal Reception Fund of Calcutta, and of the British Indian Association of Calcutta, of which he was elected one of its Vice-Presidents in 1915. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Murshidabad Association. In December, 1911, he was invited by the Government of Bengal to the Imperial Coronation Durbar at Delhi, as one of the representative noblemen of the Province.

Though the Raja has trusted officers in the different departments to manage his work, he attends to all important business himself, and gives himself no rest. He is methodical, punctual, and industrious, which enables him to successfully perform his multifarious duties which would bewilder an ordinary man. He rises early, performs his morning ablutions and worship, and goes out for his morning ride, during which he performs the out-door inspection work of the Municipality. A pure vegetarian by creed, his habits are simple,

His method of work, and industrious habits.

regular, and unostentatious. Having inherited business talents and the firm grasp of details from his father, he allows nothing to escape his keen vision. He is a pious and orthodox Jain, and has several times visited the holy places of Jain pilgrimage in Northern and Western India.

In 1913, the Raja offered himself as a candidate for election to the Bengal Legislative Council from the District Boards of the Presidency Division, but was unsuccessful in getting himself returned by only a few votes. The District Boards of Murshidabad and Nadia entirely supported his candidature. It is hoped that his efforts in this direction will be crowned with success at no distant future.

The same year, the Raja visited the historic town of Krishnagar. The Raja's visit to Krishnagar. *élite* of the town gave him a warm welcome, and fêted him in splendid style. The Raja, in his turn, also invited all the gentlemen of the place at an evening party which was very successful. He visited the Krishnagar Club and made a handsome donation to the fund of its library. The Krishnagar College also was visited, and he was pleased to make the handsome contribution of Rs. 4,000 to the College Fund, which was greatly appreciated by the public.

The Raja was re-elected Chairman of the Azimganj Municipality for the fourth time in succession. The Raja re-elected Municipal Chairman for the fourth time in succession.

Election held in March, 1915. This speaks highly of his great popularity, and the interest he takes in matters municipal.

The *Hindoo Patriot* of Calcutta, in its issue of May 31, 1915, thus noticed the event editorially :

“ Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria has been elected Chairman of the Azimganj Municipality for the fourth time in succession. It is a tribute to his popularity and influence in the locality and to the excellent work which he has done for the past nine years as Municipal Chairman. The Raja Saheb is one of the most public-spirited leaders in the Murshidabad District.”

Azimganj, Jiaganj and Baluchar, like most places in the District are in a decadent condition, and the population has been steadily decreasing. It is an uphill work to arrest this decay, as the climate is malarious, and the towns are subject to occasional epidemics of cholera and small-pox. The locality is interspersed with many insanitary pits that breed anopheline mosquitoes, and the supply of drinking water also is far from pure. The Bhagirathi, which is the main source of the water-supply, becomes stagnant in the hot season, and the water in the rainy season, when it becomes muddy on account of the flood, becomes quite undrinkable. The Raja, during his experience of the Municipal administration, extending over a period of about ten years, has been convinced

His Excellency
the Governor of
Bengal's visit to
Azimganj on 26th
August 1915.

that unless there is a supply of pure drinking water in the Municipality, there is no chance of effecting any lasting improvement in the public health. He has had two schemes for filtered water-supply prepared for the Municipality, one for Azimganj, and the other for Jiaganj, and has been doing his utmost to give effect to them. In the Municipal address presented to His Excellency, the Governor of Bengal, on the occasion of his recent visit to Azimganj on the 26th August, 1915, reference was made among other things to these schemes, and Lord Carmichael was pleased to reply as follows :—

“ I owe the pleasure of this visit to the suggestion of Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria who, when he came to see me to ask for my sympathy in your scheme for a pure water-supply, told me I would pass close to your town on my way down the Bhagirathi, and suggested that I should halt and discuss the scheme with his fellow townsmen. The Raja Saheb told me how the people are dependent for their drinking water on wells which often dry up in summer, and upon the river which, in the hot season, is reduced to a succession of stagnant pools. Mr. Williams, the Sanitary Engineer, has considered the problem and he has chosen the river as the source of supply. The whole cost (for the Azimganj scheme) is only Rs. 40,000. The cost of up-keep is estimated at Rs. 3,000 per annum. For a population of 4,000, 12 annas a year, or one anna a month does not seem an exorbitant charge

to pay for drinking water. We will discuss the matter together to-day, and I hope that we shall be able to inaugurate a scheme, which will be of lasting benefit to your ancient town, and will arrest the decrease in population."

The liberality of the Dudhorias is well-known. Besides constructing a nice hospital-building for the Jangipur Dispensary and Hospital at considerable cost in 1878, Rai Budh Sing Bahadur and Rai Bissen Chand Bahadur also constructed a temple at Giridih and one at Jangipur, and Dharamsalas at Pawa Puri near Bihar, on Mount Abu, on the Pareshnath Hill in Hazaribagh, at Azimganj, in Bombay and at Rani in Marwar. They maintained for a long time a school for Bengali girls at Azimganj, and Jain *Pathsalas* for the boys of their co-religionists at Azimganj, Benares, Palitana, and Dhoraji. The total number of their many donations and contributions for public and charitable purposes reached a very high figure. Rai Budh Sing Bahadur, during the minority of Bijoy Sing, obtained a Certificate of Honour on 29th June, 1897, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Her late Imperial Majesty, Queen-Empress Victoria, "in recognition of his liberality and public spirit."

Rai Budh Sing Bahadur a typical Jain gentleman of the old style.

Rai Budh Sing Bahadur is a typical gentleman of the old style of Jains, which is fast passing away. He is kind, affable and generous, and, in his dealings,

straightforward and honest. He is looked upon by the members of his community with just veneration and respect. He is already well advanced in years, and is now unable to participate in public life on account of the infirmities of his old age.

Since the attainment of his majority in 1900, Raja Bijoy Sing has been following in the footsteps of his illustrious father

Raja Bijoy Sing's
liberality.

and uncle. There is not a single movement in the country, aiming at public good, to which he does not contribute his quota. During the last fifteen years, the total amount of his donations and contributions has been nearly two lakhs of rupees. Keen on relieving the sufferings of the diseased and distressed, he contributed the princely sum of Rs. 1,00,000 (one lac) to Lady Minto's Fête in aid of the Nursing Association, which was greatly appreciated, and helped to make the Fête a success. The donation of about Rs. 20,000 for the construction of the Jiaganj Edward Coronation Institution has already been mentioned. He also contributed Rs. 4,000 to the Fund of the Krishnagar College which badly needed replenishment. He also contributed Rs. 10,000 to the Imperial War Relief Fund at the meeting, held at the beginning of the present Great European War, at the Berhampur Grant Hall, and presided over by Mr. W. S. Milne, the popular Collector of the District. When there was a scarcity of food grains in 1906-07, and the poor were feeling the pinch in

consequence of coarse rice selling at 6 and 7 seers per rupee, he, in conjunction with his illustrious uncle, Rai Budh Sing Bahadur, imported a vast quantity of rice and caused it to be sold to the poor at 10 seers per rupee for as many months as the scarcity lasted. This was a novel method of rendering help to the poor, which was gratefully appreciated by them. In this way, the two noblemen expended several thousands in public charity on the occasion. The Raja maintains a large number of his poor and helpless co-religionists who are granted monthly allowances. But his charitable disposition makes no distinction of castes or creeds, and he renders help wherever it is really needed. In fact, goodwill towards all living creatures, kindness and human fraternity, the three principal tenets of his religion, are well illustrated in the Raja's life.

The Raja has not, as yet, been blessed with a son, since the death of his only son in 1903, who died in infancy. He has an only daughter, Sohag Kumari, who was married in February 1912 with great pomp to Babu Srichand Nahata, the only son of Babu Harakh Chand Nahata of Baluchar, who is a rich merchant and land-holder. A grandson was born to the Raja on December 29, 1914.

The Raja is a young man of only 36 years, and possesses a fine physique and robust constitution. Though young in years, he has already made his mark in the world.

and, it is hoped, will have a long, brighter, and more useful career in his life. His wife, Rani Panna Kumari, is a noble lady, and is the real help-mate and soul-mate of her illustrious husband. May they live long and prosper is the humble prayer of the Compiler of this brief Monograph.

